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OHNR: OH-2000-43 **DOI: 25-08-2000**

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QCSID: **Text Review:**

INAME: **HAYDEN, Michael V., Lt. Gen. (USAF)**

Text w/Tape:

IPLACE: **Directors Office, OPS 2B Building**

IVIEWER: **COLLINS, Jimmie A. & HATCH, David A.**

[Tape 1, Side 1]

[TR NOTE: The audio quality of this interview is mostly good. Interviewee audio is fine, while interviewers sound slightly muted, at times.]

Collins: Okay. Now, we're off.

Hayden: Great.

Collins: Today is Friday, August the 25th, 2000. We're speaking with Lt. General Michael Hayden, Director of the National Security Agency/Chief, Central Security Service, in his office in OPS 2B. I'm Jimmie Collins, along with Dr. David Hatch, Director of the Center for Cryptologic History. This is Oral History 2000-43. The classification will be CONFIDENTIAL unless otherwise specified at the end of the tape. The essence of this interview is the "100 Days of Change": the transformation of NSA. [TR NOTE: Mr. Collins addresses the director:] General Hayden, why do you believe you were chosen to be the director at this critical time in NSA's history?

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Hayden: [TR NOTE: He chuckles.] Well, there I was in Korea. [TR NOTE: More chuckling heard.] The... I was the Air Force nominee for the job. I don't think it was all certain that the Air Force expected me to get the job; but I was the nominee. [redacted] And then we chatted. It's hard to say what his or others' motivations were. What I talked to them about was my varied background. In one sense, it... disadvantage... I'm certainly not a career SIGINTer. And I'm probably not unfair in saying I'm not even a career intel officer. I've got a lot of intel background. But it's... and it may the single largest portion of my work in the Air Force. But I've done an awful lot of other things. Maybe it was that aspect: that I would be coming to the Agency with a, perhaps, broader background – and I guess the hope is broader point of view – than some others who may have been chosen. After all, in Korea I was the Deputy Chief of Staff for U.S. Forces and U.N. Command. And so, that's quite a different... I mean, I... as the

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deputy chief of staff, you're responsible for the whole staff. The one J code I avoided was J2 – so as to avoid any perception that the Command had two J2's. So sorry. That's probably an unsatisfactory answer. But I can only suggest that it's the breadth of experience.

Hatch: Were you sent here with any specific instructions? Or just to bring NSA into the 21st century?

Hayden: Ah, instructions came from several quarters. Director Tenet, Art(hur) Money [Assistant Secretary of Defense for C3I], Porter Goss [Chairman, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence], and Senator [Richard] Shelby, [Chairman, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence]. There were common themes. All of them had a sense of urgency that they exported to me. All of them felt that time was running out. That NSA had not made the major institutional changes that it needed to make. And that, as I said, there wasn't much time left to do it. So: institutional change, sense of urgency. The best line I can think is [from] Porter Goss. He said, "General, you've got to hit a home run first time at bat." [TR NOTE: Chuckling heard.]

Hatch: Good instructions.

Hayden: Yeah. [TR NOTE: He laughs.]

Hatch: Did you find that this varied background that you talked about prepared you for the challenge here?

Hayden: Yes. I would say the answer is "yes" – although, you know, it comes with disadvantages. Just in getting acclimated. I mean, the language we use is fairly arcane. [For example, when an NSAer is asked,] "Where you do work?" And then, [in response], all of a sudden, this sea of alpha-numerics comes flowing at you. And if you're not familiar with the code, you don't have quite a good sense. That sort of thing. There was also a fair amount of learning by doing. Okay? You didn't know something existed until you bumped into it. And you don't bump into it by reading a point paper. You know, an event has to happen. You have to go somewhere. You have to be with someone. And over time – it wasn't a long period of time, but it was long enough – I began to learn about the institution of which I was the director. So, that's the disadvantage of the... not having had experience in the building before. The advantage was that when I bumped into these things, they seemed peculiar. [TR NOTE: He chuckles.] That they weren't given... They weren't taken as a given. That they... You know, the "as-is" state didn't define itself to me as the "wannabe" state automatically. Which may be more the tendency for somebody who grew up in the institution. Now, occasionally, that makes you a bomb-thrower when bombs aren't required. But the good side of that is that it gives you kind of a fresh thought about, "Well, why do we do it that way?" And so, I think it actually served me in good stead. I've had good opportunities to watch fairly senior leaders. I was in the White House for a couple of years; Secretary of the Air Force's staff group chief for a couple of years; deputy chief of staff of a major command for a couple of years; J2 for more than 2 years. And so, I've seen

a variety of leadership styles. And I guess the one thing that it taught me was: there are a variety of leadership styles. That there wasn't something formulaic that you had to do or use. And that you could relax a little bit. Kind of dance with what "brung" you, in terms of the skills that you've used to get to this point. So, that helped as well.

Collins: Now, you accepted nearly all of the recommendations of your internal and external teams. Was their thinking that closely aligned to your vision of change for the Agency?

Hayden: Ah, it was not inconsistent with it. And I don't mean to be indirectly using a double negative. But probably went a little further than my personal thinking was at the time. It wasn't that someone held a gun to my head and said, "Have an internal and external team." But internal and external events pushed me towards that decision – probably a couple of months sooner than I would otherwise have done. I mean, keep in mind: I wasn't on board here until April. Okay? We started launching these teams in early summer... mid-summer.

Hatch: Yeah.

Hayden: I'm still getting acclimated. And now, I've unleashed a couple of juggernauts inside the Agency. And no matter what they said, I would have to live with their... with their words and their recommendations. But by and large, what they recommended was consistent with what I was seeing. Maybe it took it further. You know, pulled my thinking more in the direction it was already going. And I guess the proof is that I think we've touched just about every recommendation of both teams. And we have done something about it. And, you know, some of this is a work-in-progress. But... [TR NOTE: He pauses.]

Hatch: A couple of days ago, at the seniors' day, you compared what you were doing at NSA to what you saw happening downtown with the Goldwater-Nichols reforms.

Hayden: Yeah.

Hatch: Would you care... ?

Hayden: Sure.

Hatch: To expound on that a little?

Hayden: Yeah. You have to... At least my mind has to conceptualize what's going on. I'm not very good at (B% one-off) sorts of things and... or going by instinct. I need to step back and say, "Well, you know. What... ? How does this fit into a broader picture?" And what occurred to me – it's something that I'm very familiar with being in the military – is that we have divided the Department of Defense up into two categories of organizations. [One:] Organizations that train, organize, equip and provide forces and [two:] organizations that use forces. Okay? So, providers and operators... In the DOD, the providers are the services; the operators are the CINC's. When I got here, it soon became clear to me that we had merged and interspersed those two roles...

two roles throughout the Agency. So that key components were both users and providers. Okay? They operated the same forces that they trained, organized and equipped. And so, all those things that kind of get done at a service headquarters, so that you can emphasize the expertise of business processes, were being done by the same people who are operating. And those are a different set of processes. They're a different set of skills. And so, in Goldwater-Nichols, they took the service requirements – train, organize, equip and provide – and pulled them up to the corporate level. Unmistakable trend of history there. New organizations, new authorities at the corporate level. Services had been weakened. Contrariwise, at the operational side, they pushed power down. Got Washington out of the business of fighting wars, and pushed it down to theatre CINC's and JTF commanders.

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Collins: GROUNDBREAKER, TRAILBLAZER and Project BASELINE: All of these are designed to change and focus, or redefine, the Agency's future. Can you give us a little of your personal perspective on why these cultural-altering processes were needed here?

Hayden: Yeah. We had built up habits that were the product of our special circumstances. Habits that reflected that we were a fairly self-contained organization. Habits that reflected the fact that we had a compartmentalized knowledge within us because of the need for security. Habits built up by a fairly steady stream of funds over the years. And so, we had developed ways of doing things that reflected those realities. If you want, throw in a mixture of kind of a self-selection that goes on. What are the kind of people who come to work for NSA? Very intelligent. Tend to be introverted. Very analytical in their approach to things. And those aren't always the skill sets you need for some of these processes.

Hatch: Right.

Hayden: And so, GROUNDBREAKER, TRAILBLAZER, Transformation Office, Project BASELINE: all had two or three effects intended. One – and I'll be very honest with you here – is to shake things up. Okay? To get us out of the old molds. Now, that could be viewed as destructive. And it probably is. But something had to be done to... to kind of just arrest us culturally and to kind of snap back and say, "This has got to be done differently." The second was to set in motion processes that, over time, would make us better. And the third was, I guess, the sub-set of that: the secondary and tertiary effects of doing a Project BASELINE [and] the secondary and tertiary effects of a TRAILBLAZER. The secondary and tertiary effects have been long in

coming. I don't get many emails anymore saying, "What you've done hasn't affected me." Okay? What we've... we've pretty much have affected everyone. But the jury's still out, I guess, in two areas. One of the ideas here is to... is to liberate people from these... from these requirements by handling them in a different way. And I don't know that that self-liberation had taken place as much... as much as it needs to be.

Hatch: One of the criticisms of these programs is that they may have shaken the place up a little bit too much. And that some of the best people are... are now apprehensive of the future. Some of the best people may be leaving because of those apprehensions. Organizations are less able to plan. How do you respond to that kind of criticism?

Hayden: I guess the first response I'd give you is that I believe it's accurate. I mean, in terms of... in terms of a descriptor. Okay? Yeah, people are less settled now than they were fifteen months ago.

Hatch: Right.

Hayden: I understand. Both my instincts and my reading tell me that that's a necessary evolution. Now, if you end up there, that's really bad. [TR NOTE: Chuckling heard.] Okay? I mean, if that's where it all stop – is that people are just mad at... mad as hell and disoriented – that's a bad thing. But a certain amount of disruption is necessary in order to get... Human beings being human beings, a certain amount of disruption is necessary to... That a company (B% has used to) move to the next phase of your game. It's just... Surely as nightfall is day. But that's a fascinating question, and one that I think about a lot. (b)(3)-P.L. 86-36 [redacted] I've not had opportunities to do it. But there is a tendency for us to look to self-interest. That's the sign of a post-mature organization. You know, an organization that feels itself on the upswing – that's, you know, entering youthful vigor in its institutional life – doesn't usually think in those terms. We tend to, frankly. And... (b)(3)-P.L. 86-36

Hatch: (2-3G; very faint.)

Hayden: And I just have to say that's too bad. [TR NOTE: Chuckling heard.] That we're going to go do these things anyway. In my darkest moments, I remember a quote [redacted] So, I don't know if that comforts or scares... or frightens me. But at least it happens elsewhere. I also have to keep in mind that the workforce had been pulled through a knothole for quite a long period of time. Now... in one sense. It's a lot smaller, and the work hasn't gone away. So, everyone... So, everyone is feeling the results of stress. Okay? To be fair, the workforce has not been pulled through the knothole in terms of

involuntary separation or any harsh grabbing of their futures and being directed in particular ways. The downsizing has been done as gently as gentle can be. Okay? But that said, at the end of the day, you are smaller and the work's still there. And so, there is that additional pressure over the long-term that's on the population here.

Hatch: Yeah. Well, not only is the workforce smaller, but one of the criticisms is that the people who are being downsized are the best people – those who have skills that are saleable on the outside or otherwise have options.

Hayden: There is a frightening self-selection process that goes here. The people who leave are the ones who are most (B% competent). All right?

Hatch: Yes.

Hayden: Right? And so... So, you... We work very hard on it. In fact, I know the focus that what we're talking about today is past. We're looking at "100 Days of Change." Let me give you an advertisement for the future: the next year is going to be about people. The past year was about process. It was breaking... about breaking down some cultural barriers. It was about bringing in some new people from the outside to kind of stir the pot – put a little spice in the stew. You know, Bev(erly) Wright, Al Smith, Harry Gatanas, and so on. The next year... Without undoing any of those, by the way, you know? But now, what we need to do is let them just kind of take their natural course. And let them, again, create those secondary and tertiary effects. The next year, in terms of major muscle movements that I would like to impose on us, have to do with people. How we promote. How we reward. How we hire. The gamut.

Collins: In the community you are the functional lead for SIGINT. You're responsible for implementing (1-2G) CIA. How is that being received by the rest of the community?

Hayden: The Intel community is very conservative. I would like to think... you know, it would be nice for me to tell you that our discussions are noble and that what it is we talk about are concepts and ideas. But you know, when you're in the meeting long enough, you begin to see that the concepts and ideas may be shaped by turf. And that people pick up the argument that's most convenient to them in order to protect... "Turf" is a pretty negative term. How about in order to protect their autonomy. In order to protect their freedom of action. That's the word I want to give you. So, a great example is us. Okay? [redacted] NOTE: Chuckling heard.] Not because it's a good or bad idea. Because it's not one we thought of, it's not one that we have near the top of our agenda. And frankly, it would cause us problems. We'd have to make a lot of adjustments. And so, the institutional response is simply, "No." And then we trot out all sorts of reasons why "no" is the right answer. [TR NOTE: Laughter heard.] You know? [redacted] I mean, you can go on and on. I see a lot of that. I

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see a lot of that. It's... It would not be hard to become discouraged about the lack of cooperation across the board.

Hatch: Can you talk about some of these new functions that you have placed on NSA's culture? The Chief Financial Officer...

Hayden: Right.

Hatch: The Procurement Officer. How did these ideas come to you? How did you decide to do them? And what effect do you think they are having?

Hayden: Ah... [TR NOTE: He pauses.] You're right. I came here from Korea and didn't go through DIRNSA school en route. [TR NOTE: Laughter heard.] And so, you have to... You know, these things are kind of discovery learning. It was clear to me. And we already had legislation that said, "You all need a chief financial manager." But as soon as we got Bev on board, we then began to look, "What else do we need?" Okay? After the IT system decided to go belly up for three and a half days, it was clear to me that we needed to consolidate our IT professionals. Then I added the choice: do I pick somebody on campus, or do I go out? And believe me, this was not a merit-based choice. I'm very happy I've... that we got... we picked Al Smith. Has great merit. But [to] go in or out, was not merit-based. It's pretty much a losing baseball team: you don't promote the coach to be the manager, once you change managers. You go out to get another manager if, for no other reason that you'd want a fresh start.

Hatch: Right.

Hayden: Okay? That... That explains how and why he was hired. So, if you're getting the impression here that we're calling audibles the whole game, that's probably too negative. But this was a developmental process as we went through. And as soon as we launched TRAILBLAZER, it was clear that we were going to get our brains beat out because we didn't have a good acquisition process that could support such a major programmatic effort. Okay. So, now we've got to bring aboard an SAE. Right now, though, I think we've got all the big pieces in place in terms of the processes that we have to do: a CIO, chief financial officer, senior acquisition executive, transformation office. In terms of the business processes, that about covers the waterfront. If there's any danger, it covers the waterfront too well. And that, what we now need are clear divisions of labor between them and then how they collectively and individually affect the larger organization. We had a meeting at that table yesterday on that very subject. I had the people I just described to you in the room and said, "Okay. We've got you up and running. That's good. But now we've got to (B% give) (1-2G) to this – particularly to the workforce." The workforce is saying they're confused by all these new initiatives. Frankly, I discount that a little bit. It's less confusion than it is it's new. It's less confusion than it is, "Well, I used to do this myself. I'm not sure I'm very comfortable having it done up here at the corporate level."

Hatch: Right, right.

Collins: Yes.

Hayden: Okay? But there is also confusion.

Hatch: Yes.

Hayden: And so, "Let's just make it clear and then move forward." That's one of the things that I said to you before I'm a little disappointed in. [TR NOTE: He pauses.] No director can do it all. And so, what you're forced to do is to set some things in motion with broad guidance and good people. And let it roll. Okay? Sometimes that works. [TR NOTE: Chuckling heard.] Sometimes it doesn't. And that's been a little disappointing. Some of these things I thought would have taken on their own momentum already. But a fair number of them still need personal tending.

Collins: Well, I think that may be the case in... when you look at moving IT resources up to the enterprise level.

Hayden: Right.

Collins: That seems terribly logical, but it hadn't been done.

Hayden: Right.

Collins: Why did you choose this particular time to do it?

Hayden: Yeah. That's a great question. And... you know, any director's got to pick his fights, so to speak. Maybe "fights" is not the right word. Pick his issues. Okay?

Collins: Yes.

Hayden: He can win any issue, but he can't win them all.

Hatch: Yeah. Right.

Hayden: Okay? He can do anything by fiat, but he can't do everything by fiat. Okay? The IT question was one that was lurking in the back of my mind for a long time. I wasn't in this chair six weeks when I read an IG report on our IT systems that just scared the... the bejeebers out of me.

Hatch: Yeah.

Hayden: I mean, it was tremendously critical. Now, my answer to that was to bring Ray(mond H.) Holter in as CIO and say, "Ray, write me a charter. Put teeth in it. You take it. You're in charge." The way I described it to Porter Goss was, "In the matter of a Chief Information Officer, we have made a decision to obey the law." [TR NOTE: Laughter heard.] That's all I was asking Ray to do. You know, write a charter consistent with what the law said the CIO should be doing. So... So, we did that. I guess I launched Ray on that in May? Okay? It's the end of summer now. Last year. Well, where is the charter? And it was in the graveyard of NSA decision-making. That graveyard has a title on it: "Out for Staffing." And...

Hatch: Oh, I know. [TR NOTE: He chuckles.]

Hayden: And I said, "Ray, just give me the damn charter." Okay? "You write what

you want in there. Make it hard. I'll sign it." And that's how he got his charter.

Hatch: Yes.

Hayden: Okay? So, it was... There was a lot of push back on this IT question from the very beginning. I had, then, begun to work with the NSA Advisory Board. I said, "What more do we need to do about the IT?" And the idea came that it needed to be handled at the corporate level. Okay? Well, I'm waiting for that idea to ripen, so to speak. And the IT goes belly up. At that point... You know, the stars were all kind of aligned. I had done... I had done the thinking about it. I had looked at the different possibilities. And once the IT went belly up, it was pretty easy to move. But the last tactical mile there was pretty interesting. After the IT went dark, I commissioned an internal Agency team to look at the IT. To summarize their report to me would be to simply say, "They didn't give us enough money." I felt unsatisfied by that. And so, at that point, I decided on an industry team to look at our IT. And to summarize their report to me thirty days later... And (3-4G) (B% bit) cartoonish about both, but there's truth in what I say. To summarize their report to me: "No amount of money would have saved this system." Okay? With that charter in hand, then, I said, "Okay, here's the deal." And we moved it. And with some violence. I know there was a lot of "to-ing and fro-ing". But the actual darkening of the IT made it pretty hard for anyone to make this a life-or-death issue for themselves.

Hatch: Yeah.

Hayden: They could kind of complain. But to oppose, (2-3G). [TR NOTE: A pause.]

Hatch: Yeah. NSA has taken cautious steps to open up to the outside ever since Admiral Inman. And they've been very cautious steps. But you have taken some giant steps towards making NSA more open to the outside – both in terms of receiving what the outside says and telling more of the NSA story to the outside. What prompted you to be so open? And what have been its effects on your... ?

Hayden: We... We had actually thought about this. This is also interesting. This is another effort where I brought Judy Emmel in. And said, "Judy, I think we need to be more of an activist with regard to foreign... or (I mean,) press relations and public relations." And I'll... In a minute, I'll tell you why. Okay? And so, [I asked Ms. Emmel], "How about, you know, developing a plan? What would it look like? What would our objectives be? What are the themes that we would emphasize?" So, Judy went and wrote a very forward-looking document. And I never saw that either. [TR NOTE: Laughter heard.] Okay?

Hatch: Yes.

Hayden: Okay? It was months. Okay? And just [asked], "Where is it?" [And the response would be,] "Out for staffing."

Hatch: Yes.

Hayden: Finally, I did the same thing. I said, "Just give me a copy." Okay? And then, I looked... read a copy. I annotated it. And sent it back. And by that time, of course, you know... Like a Mel Brooks movie, you know? Stop him before he kills again.[TR NOTE: He chuckles.] And so, everyone then became energized to at least get something to me because – absent that – I was going to go do it on my on.

Hatch: Yeah.

Hayden: Okay? Broadly speaking, I'm pretty comfortable with the press. So there... (B% It has just become) a natural tendency to do that. Secondly, we were reeling, I believe – no pun intended – from Will Smith's latest movie: "Enemy of the State." And I had less objection about what was truly fictional entertainment than I did with the fact that that was the only thing in the public eye about NSA. We were an intellectual and psychic vacuum. And so, when you threw the Will Smith movie into the vacuum, it expanded like a gas. And filled the whole space – because there was nothing else in that space.

Hatch: That's right.

Hayden: And so, the objective... My... Then the, kind of, the broad theory was, "Let's put something else in that space." And so... And so, I launched Judy... she... over time, I finally got the plan back to me. And we began to move forward on that. That said, we had barely begun to put that in motion before the outside world's interest imposed itself on us. Okay? So, most of the press coverage that you've seen of us was the result – certainly the early part – was the result of them coming to us. Not our going to anybody. The only thing that had changed was we said, "Yeah, we'll talk to you." That the press interest that spiked around November/ December – particularly around the Seymour Hersh article in the "New Yorker" – was all externally imposed.

Hatch: Yeah.

Hayden: All coming at us. So that the press plan – rather than creating the press coverage – merely prepared us to deal with the press coverage. And so, that was good fortune.

Hatch: Yes. We're running out of time. I'd like to ask two more questions, if I might.

Hayden: Okay.

Hatch: We've got lots more questions. And perhaps we might schedule another taping...

Hayden: Sure.

Hatch: If you're willing, sir.

Hayden: Sure.

Hatch: How have these reforms and changes played with Congress? Have they been supportive or are they still critical?

Hayden: They... Yes. (TR NOTE: Laughter heard.] "They've been supportive and

they're still critical" is the right answer.

Hatch: Okay. (2-3B by General Hayden speaking).

Hayden: [Michael] Mike Jacobs made an observation that struck me. It took me aback a bit. But when I reflected on it, I thought it was true. I get better reviews in the Agency. Okay? Now, let me talk about that, lest it sounds as arrogant as it sounded when I just said it. But it's fairly easy for me to get good reviews. You know? I talk... I'm the one who talks to the press.

Collins: Yes.

Hayden: And so, they say, "I had a nice conversation with Hayden. He seemed opened." Of course, when I call everyone else, they tell me NSA is very closed and conservative. So, you know, you kind of get this natural juxtaposition. So, I benefit by this... this contrast. As artificial as it might be, I benefit from the contrast. The [congressional] staffers like what I think our strategic vision is: what I say to them about that. They're impatient with the pace of change. Once again, [the thinking is] I've got the right idea. [But] This is a slow-moving organization." And once again, by this really artificial juxtaposition, I look good... better than the Agency. That ought to wear off real quick. [TR NOTE: Laughter heard.] And that's a good thing. I mean, I shouldn't have an identity or an evaluation separate than the identity or evaluation of the Agency. And right now, they think we're on the right path. They think we're moving too slow. And they're not sure of our success. All that said, they give us money. Okay? They give us more money than the President has asked them to give us. And so, there are moderate votes of confidence in there. And we just have to keep plugging away.

Hatch: Just one question of personal interest. The last four directors have all expressed an interest in history. But you're the only who really seems to use it. Do you use history in making your decisions?

Hayden: Oh, I do all the time. Absolutely.

Hatch: How do you use it?

Hayden: Ah, well... I mean, there's... there's a kind of Newtonian science where you're using history. You know? Gathering facts... You know? [TR NOTE: Chuckling heard.] Through the surrogate of history, rather than having been there. Remember, I've not been in the Agency before. Okay?

Hatch: Yes.

Hayden: And so, you know... You and I have talked, Doctor.

Hatch: Yes.

Hayden: About, "Can you tell me how this happened?" And that sort of thing.

Hatch: Right.

Hayden: I find it easier to think in historical terms. You know, I never think I'm George Marshall. But I can see things happening around here that I can remember parallels about things Marshall wrote about. Gee, even the memoirs of

Ulysses Grant...

Hatch: Yes.

Hayden: And... I mean, there are just, you know, things of the human experience that seem to be transferable to our circumstances here. And again, I'm not talking about being grandiose at all. I'm just talking about just routine things and how to deal with decision-making and risk-taking, and so on. And so, I've... It's been useful to have those kinds of... those kinds of examples.

Hatch: Well, we thank you very much for the interview, sir. And we...

Hayden: Oh, thank you.

Hatch: We look forward to talking to you again about these matters.

Hayden: Okay. Well, we'll do it! [TR NOTE: He chuckles.]

Hatch: Okay. [TR NOTE: Taping stops.]

[End of Interview OH-2000-43-HAYDEN]